



Building Communities Through Partnerships

Miami-Dade Housing Agency

Fiscal Year 2003-04 Agency Report



Our Mission

We, the employees of Miami-Dade Housing Agency, through our collective efforts to positively enhance and better serve this community with integrity, care, high ethical standards, and competence, are committed to provide to low- and moderate-income residents of Miami-Dade County

- Quality affordable housing opportunities
- Neighborhood revitalization and stabilization activities
- Economic independence opportunities
- Partnerships with private and public entities to optimize resources through innovative programs
- Efficient and effective management of resources

Director's Message



“Building Communities through Partnerships”

When Liberty Square opened its doors in 1939, the era of affordable housing became a reality in Miami-Dade County. As the first public housing community in Florida, Liberty Square was remarkable by many standards – it provided housing for deserving families, it provided work during a time when employment was needed by many; but mainly it provided opportunity where none existed before.

Sixty years later, the Miami-Dade Housing Agency has helped thousands of families with one of the basics of life's necessities: shelter. The importance of having a roof over one's head ranks closely with clothing and food.

Last year, the agency celebrated the 20th Anniversary of Miami-Dade County's Documentary Stamp Surtax Program, the primary funding source for affordable housing

programs in the county. This program has provided a steady source -- millions of dollars annually – to allow new affordable rental and homeownership construction and provide mortgage assistance to low and moderate-income families. Our local leaders had the vision and commitment that has forever changed this community. The Surtax celebration not only presented the agency with an opportunity for celebration, but it was also a time for reflection and recommitment.

Today, the agency -- through its senior management team and 770+ dedicated staff members-- are proving that delivering excellence every day is possible, indeed, is expected as public servants in the government sector. We will continue integrating the County's strategic plan -- the blueprint for delivering quality service

in our community -- by increasing affordable and special needs housing in our community.

MDHA has been a pioneer in the field of affordable assisted living through the conversion of Helen M. Sawyer Plaza into an assisted living facility. With the soon-to-be-opened Ward Tower Assisted Living Facility, the first to be constructed with public funds, Miami-Dade County will provide additional quality housing to help the frail elderly enjoy their golden years.

We are also excited as plans move forward for our new Central Service Center in South Miami. This center will enhance our customer service and operational efficiency by consolidating direct service functions and increasing customer accessibility.

MDHA's mission statement is our working blueprint and each division and support areas -- Development and Loan Administration, Finance

and Administration, New Markets/Applicant and Leasing Center, Public Housing, Private Rental Housing, Planning and Development, Compliance, Director's Office -- has a vital role in our collective efforts to continue providing families with quality affordable housing. The demand for our services has never been greater -- because the needs in the community are so great.

Extend your thinking around the corner of convenience and into the neighborhood of possibility.

Together we can do it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alphonso K. Brewster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alphonso K. Brewster, Director

Quality Affordable Housing Opportunities

The agency's involvement in community development, infill housing and neighborhood revitalization programs are transforming and creating new homeownership and rental housing choices and opportunities for Miami-Dade County residents. This past year, we provided quality affordable housing opportunities to low- and moderate-income residents of Miami-Dade County. The agency:

- Closed 307 homeownership loans, thus exceeding the goal of 300 set at the beginning of the year. The new homeowners include several County/public school employees and a number of disabled residents. The agency also helped 21 former Scott/Carver residents purchase homes.



Sherrae Williams, Section 8 homeowner, with MDHA's Laverne Taylor

- Launched the new Section 8 Homeownership Program, allowing Section 8 families to use vouchers to purchase homes. Over 17 families have become homeowners; more than 330 families have received homeownership counseling services; another 125 have completed homeownership counseling

“This is something that my family really appreciates. It's wonderful to have a porch and yard that you can sit down in.”

– Sabrina McCall

Former Scott Homes Resident who purchased a home



Hibicus Pointe Apartments

- Provided housing choices to former public housing residents through the issuance of 565 Mobility Pool Housing Choice Vouchers as well as assisted 15 tornado victims with special Housing Choice Vouchers.
- Maintained the leasing rate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program at a 99 percent average, thus providing assisted housing to approximately 14,000 low- and very-low income families in Miami-Dade County.



- Closed 19 construction loans representing assistance in the development of 2,546 affordable housing units, including 275 homes and totaling a County investment of nearly \$16 million.



Fourteen units were purchased and rehabilitated by Gwen and John Johnson, pictured here with MDHA's Willie Ballard, through the Surtax program's RFA cycle. Now the 46th Street duplexes are providing quality affordable rental housing in the community.

Neighborhood Revitalization and Stabilization Activities

The Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) VI program, a federally-funded program through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, has as its goal to eradicate obsolete housing stock and to rebuilding viable housing.

“The HOPE VI Program was developed as a result of recommendations by National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, which was charged with proposing a National Action Plan to eradicate severely distressed public housing. The Commission recommended revitalization in three general areas: physical improvements, management improvements, and social and community services to address resident needs.”

–Source: U.S. HUD

Scott Homes



- Successfully relocated 700+ residents of the HOPE VI program -- Scott Homes and Carver Homes -- and are nearing completion of the demolition phase. Approximately 71 percent of residents used Section 8 vouchers to relocate-- well over the average 30 percent usage.
- Assisted 500+ homeowners living in the HOPE VI revitalization area by providing exterior facelifts -- paint and landscape -- to their homes. The award winning Neighborhood Revitalization program also provided employment and business opportunity -- certifying 49 small minority contractors as Community Small Business Enterprises during the same period.
- Our infill housing program is transforming once vacant lots into affordable homes in many core neighborhoods. The agency has reviewed over 900 lots, approved in excess of 650, and awarded more than 400 lots for development of affordable homes through this program. 133 new infill homes have been completed and another 42 homes are in various stages of completion.



“It’s a good program to help the community, and I’m glad that I was able to have my home painted because this is the home I live in; the home I bought from my great-grandfather.

It was important for me to keep it looking neat.”

– Ava Johnson-Garner,
HOPE VI Beautification Program Participant

“This program has allowed me to give people in the community work. It gives me the chance to give employment opportunities to residents in the community and to be a major part of the community’s improvement. Also, this has given small businesses such as ours the chance to work on other projects. Even more importantly, I was raised in this community and to see money being put in to help restore it warms my heart.”

– Phyllis Carswell
Section 3 landscaping business owner

Neighborhood Revitalization and Stabilization Activities

[Continued]

“The program was extremely helpful and the staff very pleasant. The inspector truly made the process pleasurable and my family and I are extremely grateful for having him work with us.”

– Jacqueline Vargas

Home repaired through the Single Family Rehab Loan Program



➤ Helping homeowners maintain their properties also helps to sustain neighborhoods. The agency fulfilled its commitment to providing help to low-income homeowners through its Single Family Rehabilitation Loan Program. This past year, the agency closed 125 loans totaling \$2,361,400 for

the rehabilitation of homes, including 32 loans for elderly residents, 27 loans for disabled residents, and 16 window-shutter loans

➤ The agency also remains committed to providing housing services for special needs populations — such as those residents transitioning from former homelessness



After kids, buying a home is the second biggest investment.

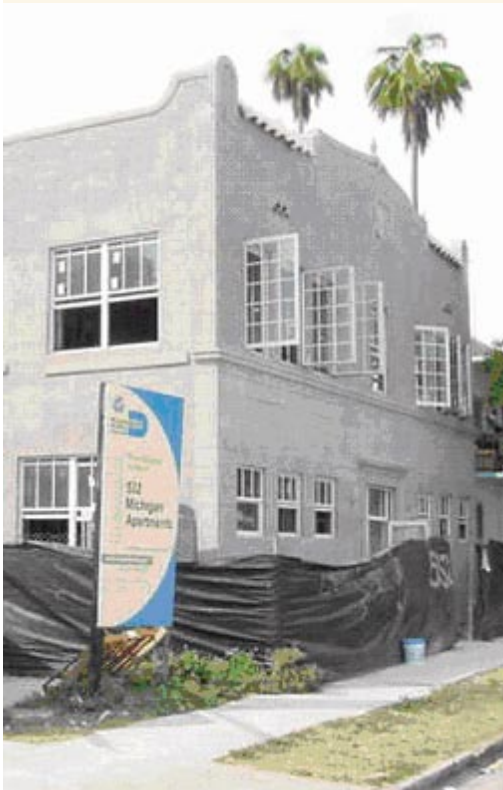
– Seddrick and Donna Reeves

through program funding and contract monitoring. Brownsville Christian Housing Center and City View Apartments are examples of two Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy (SRO) projects that will provide housing for 120 adults.

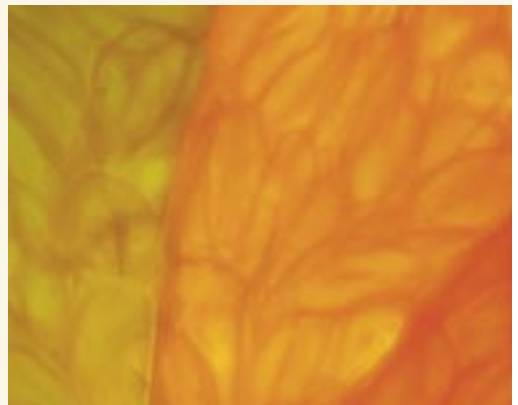


Brownsville Christian Housing Center

Renovation underway on Miami Beach



➤ MDHA has worked with the Miami Beach Community Development Corporation (CDC) to preserve affordable housing units on Miami Beach. The CDC acquired the property in “as-is” condition and set out to rehabilitate the property for 18 elderly rental units. MDHA provided low-interest loans totaling \$1 million for this project which costs \$2,499,300.



Partnerships With Private and Public Entities to Optimize Resources Through Innovative Programs



Island Place Apartments

- The agency is committed to increasing the stock of affordable housing through partnerships with other nonprofit housing organizations. Island Place Apartments, a Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation building, is an example of the Private Rental Housing division's partnership with Greater Miami Neighborhoods, Inc. to provide 50 units for very-low and low-income families.
- MDHA helped to implement the Anti-Predatory Lending Program in conjunction with Board of County Commissioner Barbara Carey-Shuler, Fannie Mae, and the United States

Department of Housing and Urban Development - HUD. The agency also co-sponsored workshops with HUD for owners of Section 8 New Construction and Substantial Rehabilitation projects to increase understanding of federal requirements and regulations.



Vista Verde Homes

- Sold 14 homes that were part of the Vista Verde community, thanks to MDHA's partnership with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Universal Truth and Opa-Locka Community Development Corporations

Economic Independence Opportunities



“It’s really meant a lot to me because before, at the place where I was working, I did not have anything and here I have everything.”

- Jacqueline Francois
FSS Participant

Miami-Dade Housing Agency also helps families who are currently living in our subsidized rental properties with the necessary tools to become self sufficient. The Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program requires a

contractual commitment from the residents to pursue their personal goals. Although the most common goal is homeownership, many residents have multiple goals which include educational and employment goals.

“I believe this program is very good because it helps you prepare yourself for the future by giving you an idea of what the necessary steps are in order to achieve your goals.”

- Gladys Del Ray
FSS Participant



Economic Independence Opportunities

[Continued]



It's helped me to succeed and build my career. I'm getting a home and improving my job skills. I was at the bottom and now I'm on top. I'm now a supervisor; I started as a laborer."

- Brenda Lane
Section 3 participant

"She has been a go-getter from the very beginning. Everything that she's been asked to do from going into homeownership to getting a job, she has done. I'm very proud of her."

- Deetra Freshly
DHS caseworker on Section 3 participant Brenda Lane

➤ The FSS program has exceeded the mandatory program size by 36 percent for a total of 333 participating families. More than 150 families have escrow balances totaling more than \$358,000. In addition, five FSS families have completed the homeownership goal either through affordable housing programs, the Section 8 homeownership program, or other private sources.

➤ FSS is also assisting residents in the HOPE VI program through in-kind and supportive services totaling over \$8 million. By April 2004, 80 percent of former Scott/Carver families had become employed, enrolled, or completed a self-sufficiency program. This helped the Section 3 program surpass its new hire goal of 30 percent by 27 percent for new contracts for the fiscal year 03-04.

Effective and Efficient Management of Resources

➤ The agency made over 8,900 public housing offers, 250 public housing transfer offers, 5,300 Moderate Rehabilitation offers, 800 Mod Rehab transfer offers. In addition, screened over 4,100 project-based applicants and certified in excess of 1,300 project-based applicants

➤ The agency successfully opened the housing waiting list for project-based housing for zero and one-bedroom units through a coordinated, interdepartmental effort that included a community outreach/public awareness campaign and county-wide distribution of applications, processed over 10,000 applications

utilizing Scantron technology which significantly reduced processing time and associated costs

➤ Continued to successfully utilize an effective auditing system for the tenant-based, i.e. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and project-based housing programs



Central Service Center Groundbreaking



MDHA staff with Scantron equipment

➤ Broke ground on site of new Central Service Center, which will enhance customer service and improve accessibility by consolidating direct service functions in one building located next to the South Miami Metrorail Station

Effective and Efficient Management of Resources

[Continued]

- The agency saved over \$35,000 by reducing insurance broker-fees and over \$560,000 in fleet charges by eliminating 34 vehicles



MDHA staff at training workshop

- Created a recruitment tracking report to identify all budgeted, vacant, and unauthorized positions.
- Trained nearly 800 employees in Delivering Excellence and Hurricane Preparedness requirements and developed Community Service requirement training for all site managers
- Successfully reached a record low of 3 percent delinquency rate for the entire portfolio of homeownership loans



Private Rental Housing staff looking over Landlord Guide

countywide and 1 percent of loans funded by the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program. The tracking of County loans through the new Anti-Predatory Lending Program and the Foreclosure Prevention Initiative along with the assistance of the County Attorney's office resulted in no new foreclosures.

- The agency continues to increase landlord interest in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program through the use of referral listings and contact with real estate organizations, the board of realtors, and individual property owners, as well as launching a Landlord Outreach Guide that details the requirements and process for participating in this program

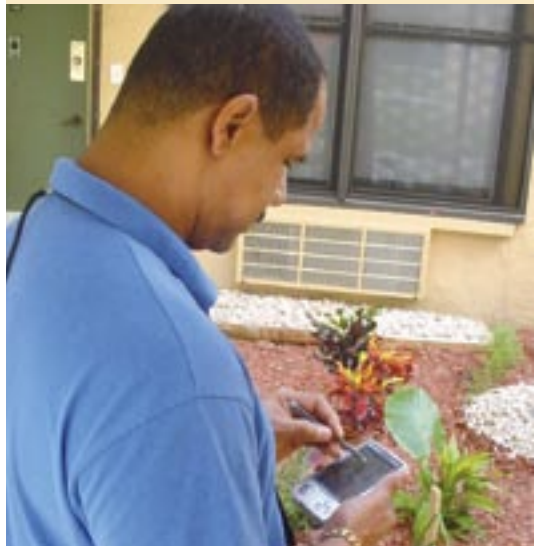
Effective and Efficient Management of Resources

- Developed a tracking system to monitor units under abatement for all housing programs, thus improving the efficiency of the abatement and reinstatement process
- Developed a new tracking system to monitor submissions and requests for rent increases and changes of ownership of Section 8 landlords
- Established an initiative with the Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser's office to coordinate detection of Section 8 landlords who were claiming homestead exemption resulting in four cases of fraud being reported to HUD's Office of Inspector General (OIG) for prosecution
- Investigated and closed 355 fraud and other investigations, a 28 percent increase over the previous fiscal year, which included the termination of 16 assisted housing participants under the "One Strike" policy for violent or drug activity
- Completed 98 audits and compliance reviews and 45 assisted housing participant reviews as well as 730 grievance appeals. The number of grievance appeals represented an increase of 84 percent over the previous fiscal year.

"We are proud of the fact that we have developed an inspection module, with QAS and MIS, that supports the improvement and maintenance quality of residents' properties," – Patrick Brown,

MDHA Public Housing Director

QAS Inspector



Effective and Efficient Management of Resources

[Continued]

- Developed an innovative process to return off-line housing to management operations by combining contractor and in-house trade efforts to maximize funding for Capital Fund Program (CFP) renovations at several properties
- Received an Award of Merit from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) for the handheld PC inspection system, which allows inspectors to generate reports from the field and to facilitate follow-up inspections
- Developed management teams to address the development of policies in response to new HUD regulations and changes in existing policy. Collective efforts of the agency's public housing regional management team led to training and development procedures that support the new and revised policies.
- The Employee Demonstration of Growth and Efficiency (EDGE) Program continues to be a strong performer for



Annie Coleman Gardens

“The EDGE program has motivated the management staff to take the initiative and be more open in learning skills and training.”

– Leshia Elie, Site Manager Annie M. Coleman Gardens

reclaiming management functions from expiring contracts with several private management firms. By the end of FY04-05 all public housing stock will be returned to MDHA management.

Carlos Alvarez
Mayor



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Miami-Dade County provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment and services and does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

"It is the policy of Miami-Dade County to comply with all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act."



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